



State of California  
The Natural Resources Agency  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	JDSF Road 540 Maintenance and Pygmy Habitat Restoration Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Jackson Demonstration State Forest Fort Bragg, CA 95437	COUNTY	Mendocino
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Mike Powers, Forester III		
ADDRESS	CALFIRE Jackson Demonstration State Forest 802 North Main Street Fort Bragg, CA 95437	PHONE	(707) 964-5674

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) occupies an area of approximately 48,652 acres within Mendocino County, California. Within the boundaries of JDSF is an existing road system that is approximately 450 miles in length. Road 540 has not been adequately maintained because it has not been part of a timber harvest operation and is not permanently open to the public for vehicle traffic.

This project is intended to address ongoing impacts due to lack of adequate road drainage structures, maintain the road in a condition that is readily useable during the dry periods of the year and restore areas of existing road/user built trails back to native pygmy habitat vegetation. This project proposes to install new drainage structures in the form of 21 rolling dips at a frequency of 200-250 feet apart to minimize the diversion of water for long distances and minimize erosion potential. These new rolling dips will be constructed by importing road rock base to build up the road surface to create the high point to move water off the road and creating a small outlet just off the road for water to flow. In addition to the installation of the rolling dips there is one short segment of road (approx. 400 feet length) will require that the road surface be reconstructed using a combination of locally sourced fill, primarily from the road cut bank and imported road base rock to create a functional road surface. This project also includes the restoration of areas that are devoid of pygmy habitat (existing road surfaces and user built trails) by passively encouraging natural re-vegetation. This will involve the installation of adequate drainage structures (waterbreaks) and the placement of large woody material on the bare surfaces. The woody material will be sourced from the clearing of encroaching trees and vegetation into the road prism of Road 540.

### EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 1 and 4  
☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):  
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)  
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))  
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

**REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT:** This project fits under portions of two classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA: Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land). Most of the project activities will occur within previously disturbed areas. The areas where new ground disturbing activities might occur are limited and are best described as minor in scope.


Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at JDSF Offices in Fort Bragg.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUL 25 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

  
Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director  
Resource Protection and Improvement  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Date 7/24/19

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom left of the page.



## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report form is intended for use by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a Notice of Exemption (NOE) document for a proposed CAL FIRE project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable Categorical Exemptions, this report presents CAL FIRE's review for possible "Exceptions" that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the Department.

Author: **Michael Powers**  
Title: **Forester III**  
Address: **Mendocino Unit JDSF, 802 North Main Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437**  
Phone: **(707) 964-5674**  
Email: **mike.powers@fire.ca.gov**

Project Name: **JDSF Road 540 Maintenance and Pygmy Habitat Restoration**  
Project Number: **N/A**  
Program Type: **FRIF Special Fund Project**  
CAL FIRE Unit: **Mendocino Unit (MEU); Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF); Department of Parks and Recreation.**  
County: **Mendocino**  
Acres: **+/- 3.8 acre**  
Legal Location: **Portions of Sections 31, 32, 33, T18N-R17W, MDB&M; Portions of Sections 4, 5, T17N R17W, MDB&M.**  
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s): **Fort Bragg and Mendocino.**  
☒ Project Vicinity Map Attached ☒ Project Location Map Attached ☒ Photos Attached

### Other Public Agency Review/Permit Required:

Would the project result in:	YES	NO
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:

There is no proposed work within any watercourse bed, bank or channel or within 50 feet of a watercourse.

### Project Description and Environmental Setting (Describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):

Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) occupies an area of approximately 48,652 acres within Mendocino County, California. Within the boundaries of JDSF is an existing road system that is approximately 450 miles in length. Road 540 has not been adequately maintained because it has not been part of a timber harvest operation and is not permanently open to the public for vehicle traffic.

This project is intended to address ongoing impacts due to lack of adequate road drainage structures, maintain the road in a condition that is readily useable during the dry periods of the year and restore areas of existing road/user built trails back to native pygmy habitat vegetation. Road 450 has been constructed in such a manner that the road surface is mostly below the natural grade of the surrounding ground. As such road drainage is not adequate to disperse road runoff to minimize concentration of water and erosion. This project proposes to install new drainage structures in the form of 21 rolling dips at a frequency of 200-250 feet apart to minimize the diversion of water for long distances and minimize erosion potential. These new rolling dips will be constructed by importing road rock base to build up the road surface to create a high point to move water off the road to a small outlet just off the road for water to flow.

In addition to the installation of the rolling dips there is one short segment of road (approx. 400 feet length) that will be reconstructed using a combination of locally sourced fill, primarily from the road cut bank and imported road base rock to

create a functional road surface.

This project also includes the restoration of areas that are devoid of pygmy habitat (existing road surfaces and user built trails) by passively encouraging natural re-vegetation. This will involve the installation of adequate drainage structures (waterbreaks) and the placement of large woody material on the bare surfaces. The woody material will be sourced from the clearing of encroaching trees and vegetation into the road prism of Road 540.

## Environmental Impact Analysis

### Aesthetics

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

**Aesthetics will temporarily be changed from the maintenance of the roads and habitat restoration, but impacts would not be significant.**

### Agriculture and Forest Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds and compliance with FPRs.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?

- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

**The road maintenance/habitat restoration work will not have a significant impact to nesting birds as no trees will be removed and minor vegetation will be impacted. The road decommissioning will not convert prime or unique farmland, or convert forest/timberland to non-forest use. Impacts would be less than significant.**

### Air Quality

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ Yes ☐ No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

**The road maintenance/habitat restoration work will not create significant fugitive dust conditions that would be subject to Rules 1-400(a), 1-430(a) and 1-1430(b) of the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District.**

### Biological Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?  
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current NDDDB review completed? Results discussed below:  
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

**Disturbance to natural vegetation will be minimized as the work will be conducted on existing roads with limited disturbance beyond the road prisms. The installation of the road drainage will require disturbance of 30-50 square feet of vegetation and ground outside of the road prism to allow for adequate water drainage. Other vegetation disturbance is needed to maintain adequate clearances of the existing roadway. No widening or alteration of the existing road prism is proposed. All other soil and vegetation disturbances is limited to existing roads. A botanical survey report has been prepared for the proposed project. See attached table of species considered in the CNDDDB. Impacts would be less than significant.**

### Cultural Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
- ☒ Yes ☐ No Was a CAL FIRE Staff or Contract Archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
- ☒ Yes ☐ No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project effect any historic buildings or archaeological site?
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A current archaeological records check has been completed for the entire JDSF ownership and an Archeological Survey Report was prepared for this project (July 3, 2019). The road maintenance and habitat restoration work will involve below-the-ground disturbance within existing road prisms. A survey was conducted within the project area (roadway, adjacent area, and on small mid-slope terraces and stream channels near the roadway). No cultural resources were found during the surveys. There is no expected disturbance to any identified archaeological or historical resource. There is no impact to any archeological or historical resource expected due to the proposed work.

### Geology and Soils

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The road maintenance and habitat restoration work will not result in substantial adverse effects from an earthquake fault, landslides, or result in substantial soil erosion.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

Sources of GHG emissions from this project include the emissions from gas and diesel engine powered equipment. The implementation of this project will involve the use of excavator, tractor and utility vehicles. The project area is approximately 1.45 miles of road length and 3.8 acres in area. The implementation of the project will to be completed over 4-6 weeks spanning 1-2 years. The GHG emissions released by project activities are anticipated to be approximately 30.0 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e. The significance threshold CAL FIRE uses to determine significance has been established by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association as 900 tons/year for indirect sources (combined construction and operational emissions). It is estimated that emissions associated with the operation of equipment for this project is below this threshold.

#### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculations

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) calculations are based on estimates of diesel/gas fuel consumed by traveling to and from the work sites and heavy equipment operation. Calculations are detailed below.

#### Transportation: Utility Vehicles

- Project completed in 24 days
- Average round trip distance: 50 miles/day for 24 days = 1,200 miles

Utility Vehicle 2,400 miles / 11 miles per gallon = 219 gallons  
(x2):

219 total gallons gas

219 gallons gas x 8.91 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/gal. = 1,951 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub>e

1,951 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub>e ÷ 1000 kg/metric ton = 2.0 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e for the portion of the project operator transportation.

#### Heavy Equipment: Excavator and Tractor

- Heavy equipment operations portion of the project completed in 24 days using one excavator and one tractor for 7 hours/day = 336 hours
- Approximate haul distance 50 miles roundtrip (x 8 times)

Tractor Use: 168 hours x 8 gallons /hour = 1,344 gallons

Excavator Use: 168 hours x 8 gallons /hour = 1,344 gallons

Transport: 400 miles / 6 miles per gallon = 67 gallons  
2,755 total gallons diesel

2,755 gallons diesel x 10.15 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/gal. = 27,963 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub>e  
27,963 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub>e + 1000 kg/metric ton = 28.0 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e for the portion of the project completed by heavy equipment operations.

Emissions from project activities:

2.0 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e (operator transportation) + 28.0 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e (heavy equipment operations) = 30.0 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e

Conversion Factors	
1 gallon diesel = 10.15 kilograms CO <sub>2</sub>	1 metric ton = 1000 kilograms
1 gallon gas = 8.91 kilograms CO <sub>2</sub>	
One ton carbon = 3.67 tons CO <sub>2</sub>	1 ton = 0.907185 metric tons

#### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The road maintenance/habitat restoration work will not result in any hazards or hazardous materials.

#### Hydrology and Water Quality

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The road maintenance/habitat restoration work avoids watercourses and will not result in significant impacts to any watercourse or body of water.

#### Land Use and Planning

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts would occur to land use and planning.

#### Mineral Resources

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts would occur to mineral resources.

#### Noise

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Noise associated with the road maintenance/habitat restoration work will be limited to small areas and will be temporary. No significant impacts would occur.

#### Population and Housing

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts would occur to population and housing.

### Public Services

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts would occur to public services.

### Recreation

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The proposed road maintenance/habitat restoration work will not have a significant impact to recreation. Some of the habitat restoration areas are on "user built trails" and will shift recreational use of these unsanctioned trails back onto the existing Road 540.

### Transportation/Traffic

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The proposed road maintenance/habitat restoration work will not have a significant impact to traffic.

### Utilities and Service Systems

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The proposed road maintenance/habitat restoration work will not have any impact to utilities or service systems.

### Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:

None

### Mandatory Findings of Significance:

YES NO  
☐ ☒

(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects)

☐ ☒

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

☐ ☒

### Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):

This project fits under portions of two classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA: Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land). Most of the project activities will occur within previously disturbed areas. The areas where new ground disturbing activities might occur are limited and are best described as minor in scope. These areas were carefully inspected for environmental concerns. CALFIRE has determined this project will not impact the environment.

**Conclusion:**

☒ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. The Department considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A Notice of Exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

☐ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site which precludes the use of a Categorical Exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

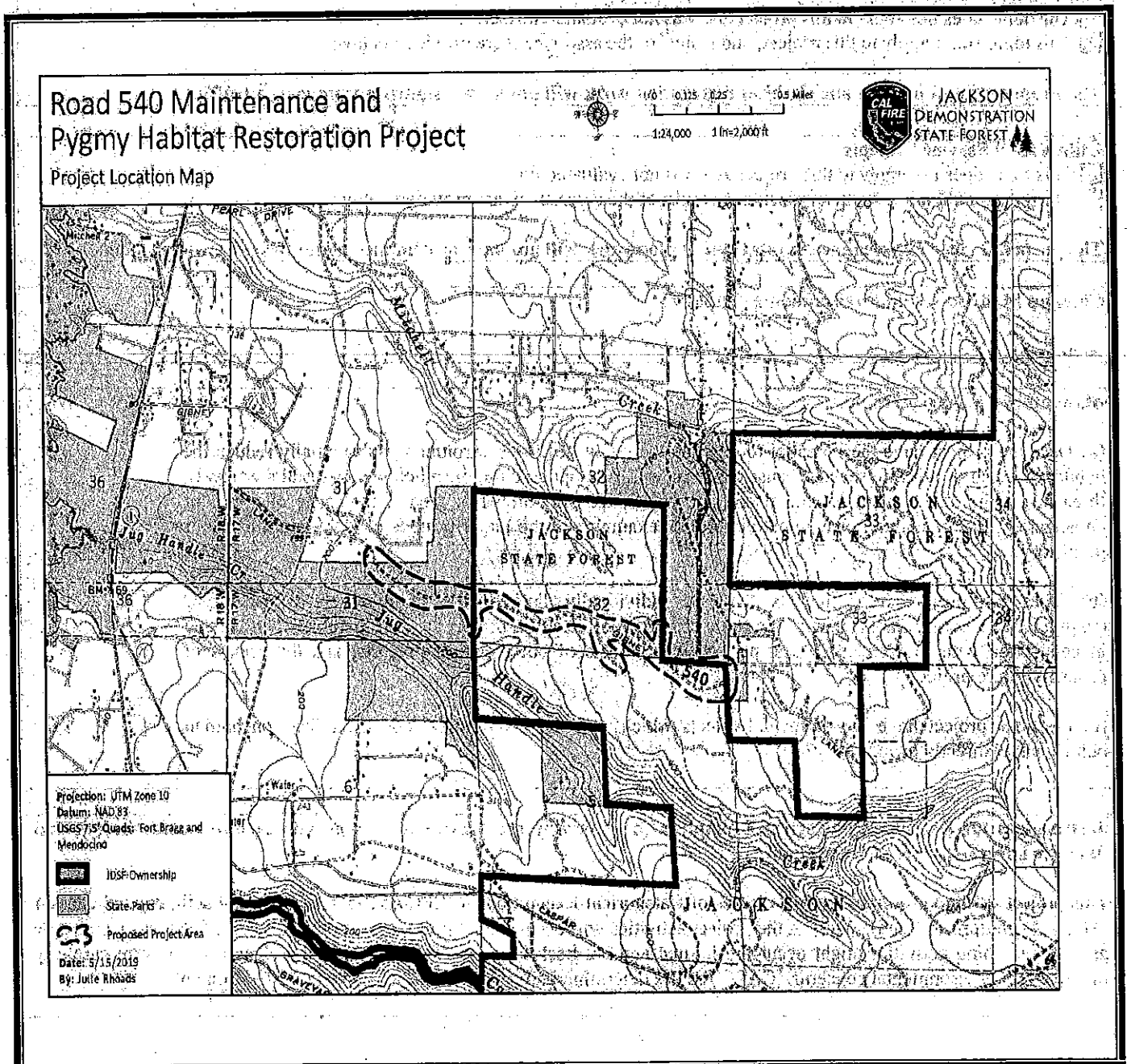


Figure 1. Project Overview Map.

CHK2016 COPY IF NEED NEW PIVOT

FY (All)

Sum of DOLLAR AMOUNT		GL_ACGT_NO		Grand Total	
Project Name	PCA NO	6150 Encumbered	6220 Budget	9000 Expended	Grand Total
San Mateo - Santa Cruz	88105	\$ 25,171.46	\$ 12,055,000.00	\$ 1,847,208.54	\$ 13,927,380.00
	88305	\$ 25,171.46	\$ 12,135,000.00	\$ 1,871,706.49	\$ 14,031,877.95
Grand Total					

GL_ACGT_NO
6220 Budget
9000 Expended
6150 Encumbered

OBJECT DETAIL

831 P  
836 WD  
841 C

CATEGORY

- 1 Personal Services
- 2
- 3 Operating Expenses
- 4 Special Items
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8 Capital Outlay

